Estimating Transient Water Storage from Hurricane Harvey using GPS observations of Vertical & Horizontal Land Motion

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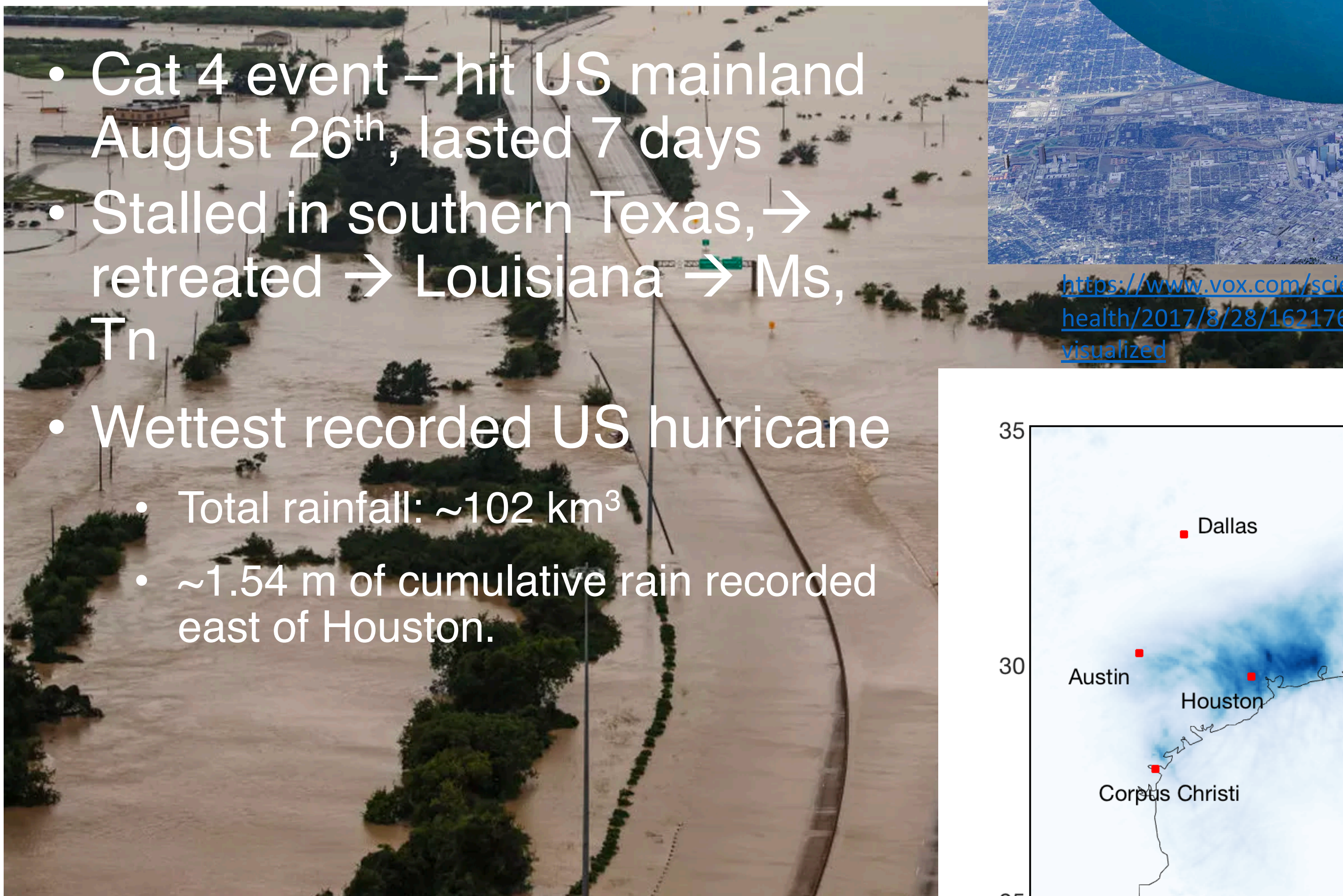
Introduction

- **Question**: How does water accumulate and dissipate following a major hurricane? Can we measure this using GPS data?

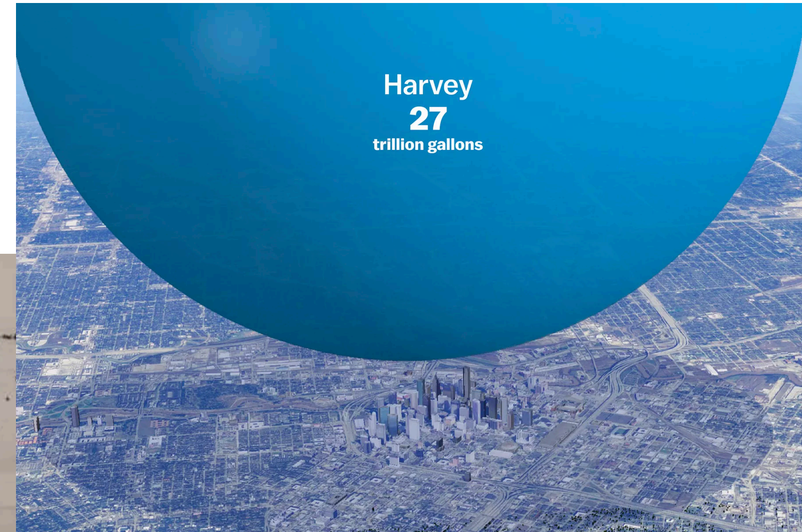
- **Method**: Use cGPS data to measure Earth's deformation from water mass, this can be used to track the evolution of TWS
  - TWS = standing surface water, ground water + absorbed in soil.

- **Motivation:** Quantifying TWS important for:
  - **Understanding**: ability of drainage systems to respond and retain extreme influxes of water.
  - **Applications**: Stored water poses a secondary and **continued flood hazard**, once released into nearby streams. Observations of water storage could potentially improve **operational flood forecasting** used by flood managers.

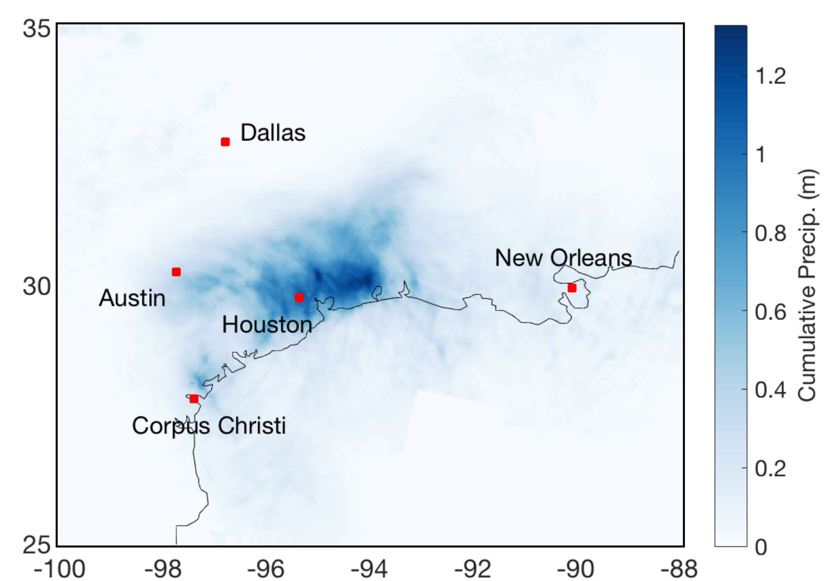
Background



- Cat 4 event – hit US mainland August 26th, lasted 7 days
- Stalled in southern Texas,→ retreated → Louisiana → Ms, Tn
- Wettest recorded US hurricane
  - Total rainfall: ~102 km^3
  - ~1.54 m of cumulative rain recorded east of Houston.



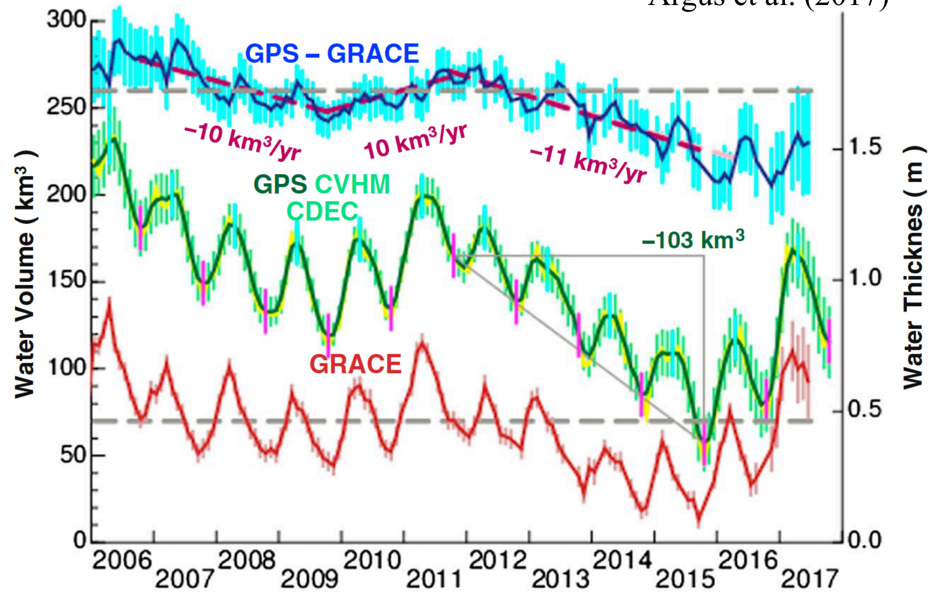
https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2017/8/28/16217626/harvey-houston-flood-water-visualized



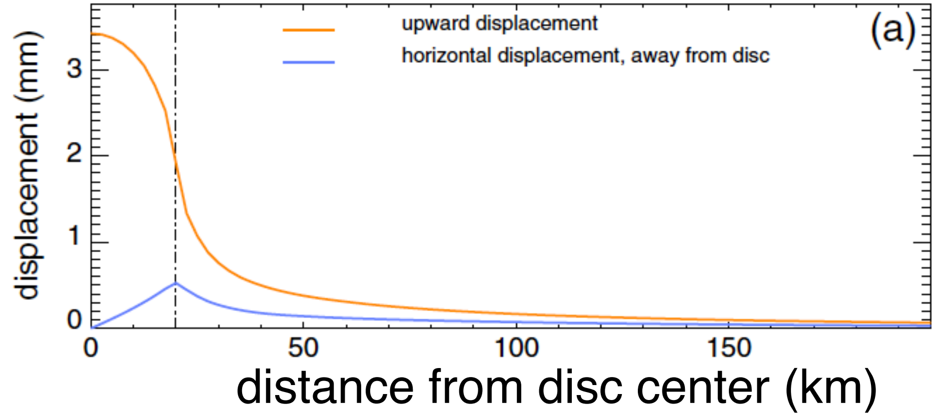
Outline

- Hydrologic loading primarily causes vertical surface motion
- **Challenge**: Noise level of vertical GPS is relatively high (~3 mm).
  - Usually we average over large areas (regional-continental)
  - Long timescales (months-seasons) to characterize loading.
- Is the stability of GPS positioning sufficient to resolve Harvey's transient loading signature?

Argus et al. (2017)



Earth's elastic response to unloading water disk
20 km diameter and 1 m thickness



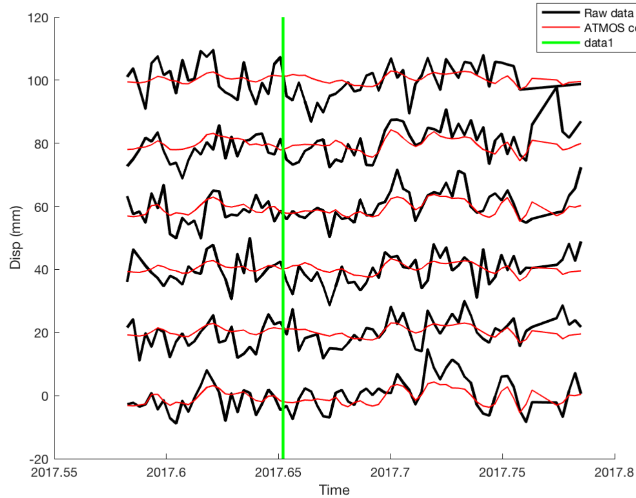
Wahr et al. (2013)

Non-tidal atmosphere + ocean loading (IERS/GFZ)

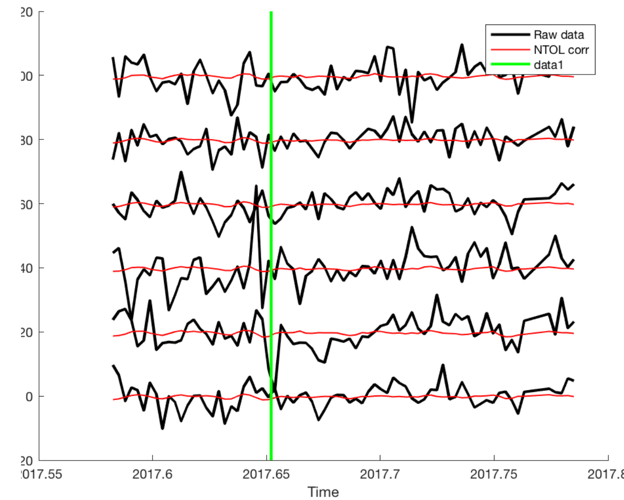
Black = data
Red = correction
Green = landfall of Harvey

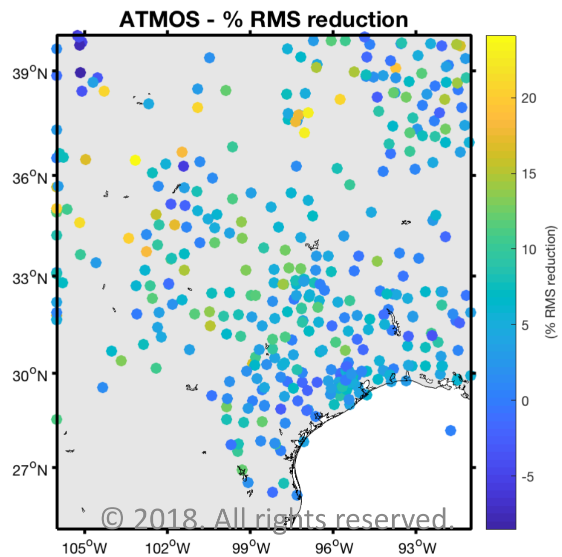
- Corrections for non-tidal atmospheric loading + ocean loading
- Effect of atmospheric pressure changes unloading-loading surface.
- ATMOS: RMS average reduction =up to ~20%
- NTOL RMS reduction up to 10% near-shore

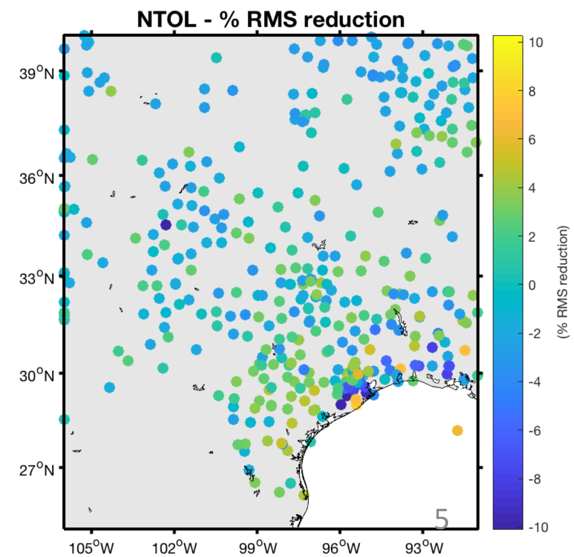
Atmospheric loading (red)



NTOL correction (red)

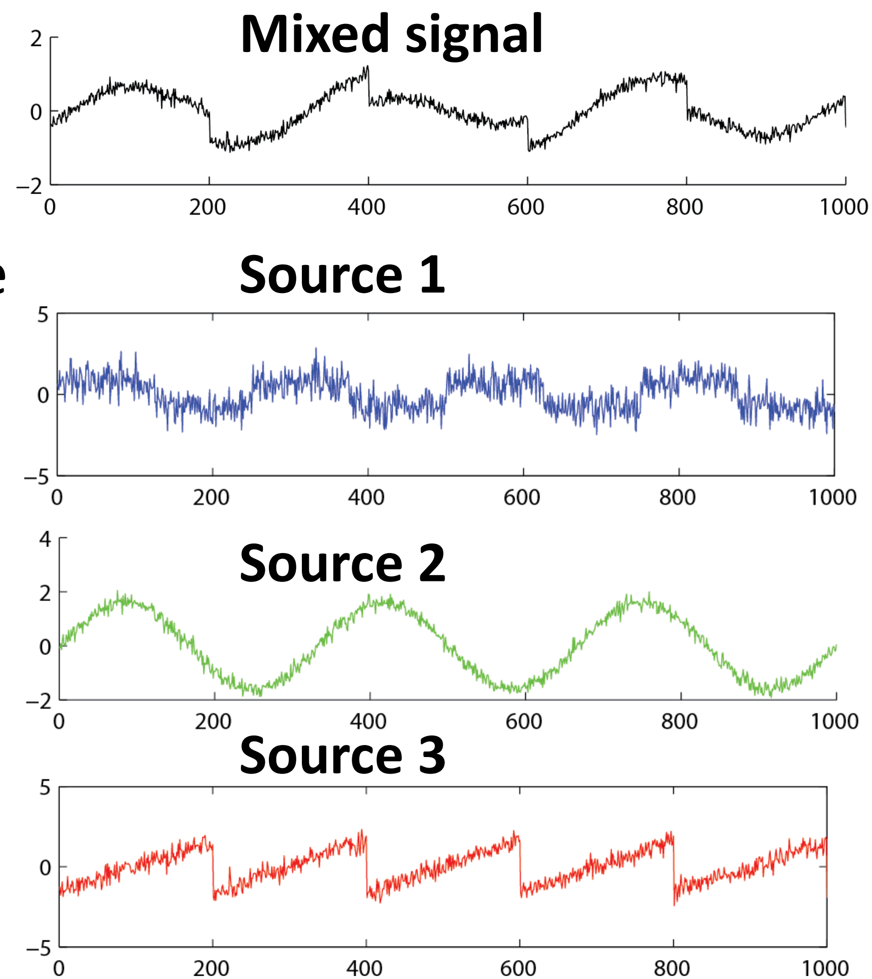


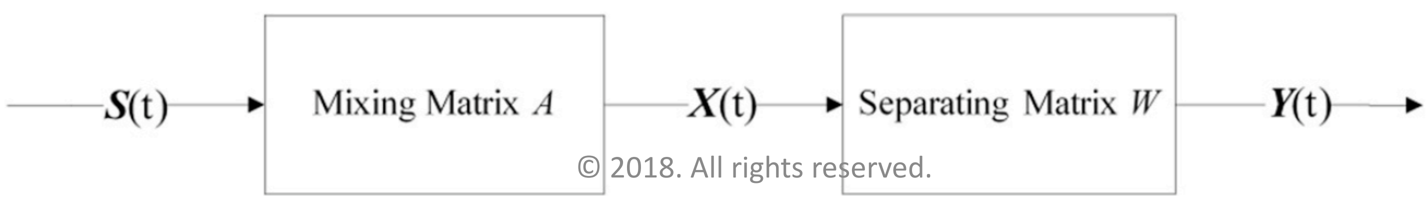




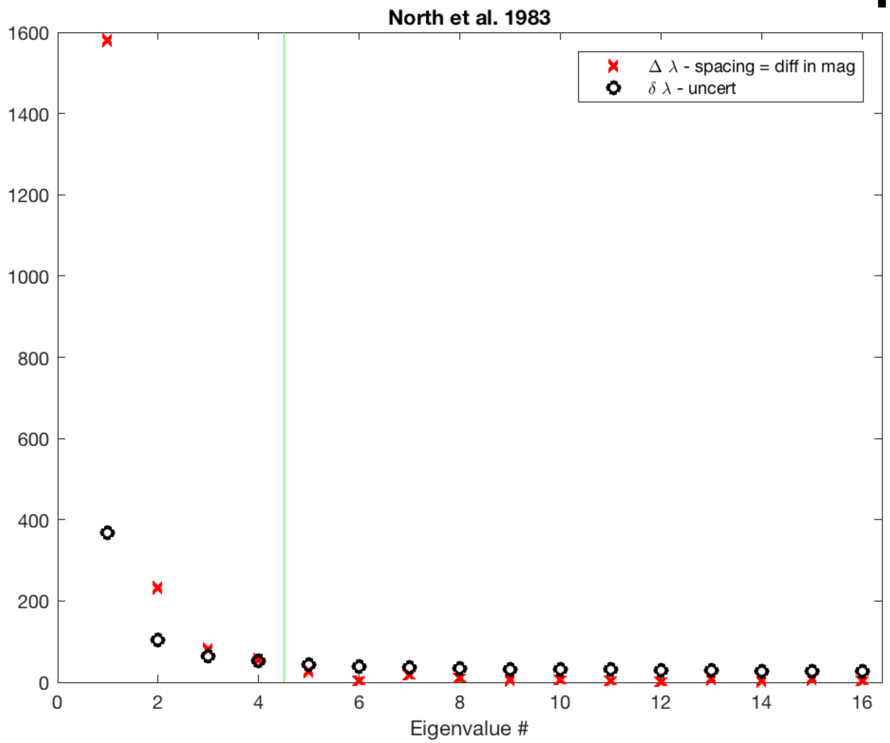
ICA - Independent Component Analysis

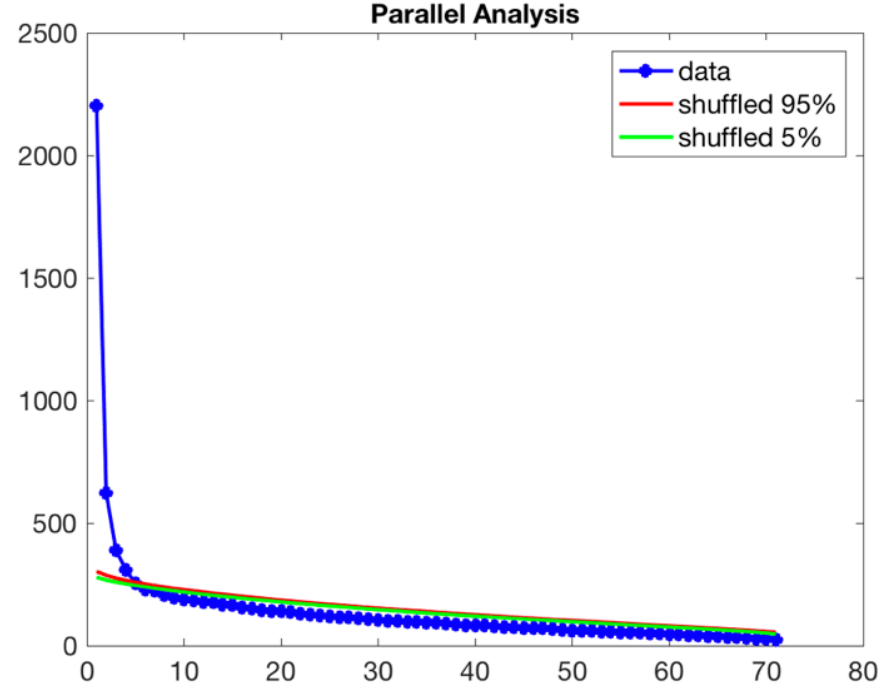
- ICA – identifies components that are statistically independent
- **Advantages**: ICA uses independence as a constraint to separate source, while PCA uses variance/ correlation.
  - ICA suited for non-Gaussian distributions
- Use reconstruction ICA algorithm, Hyvärinen & Oja (2000).





How many components to decompose data? - Stopping rules





"North's rule of thumb": Measure of seperability

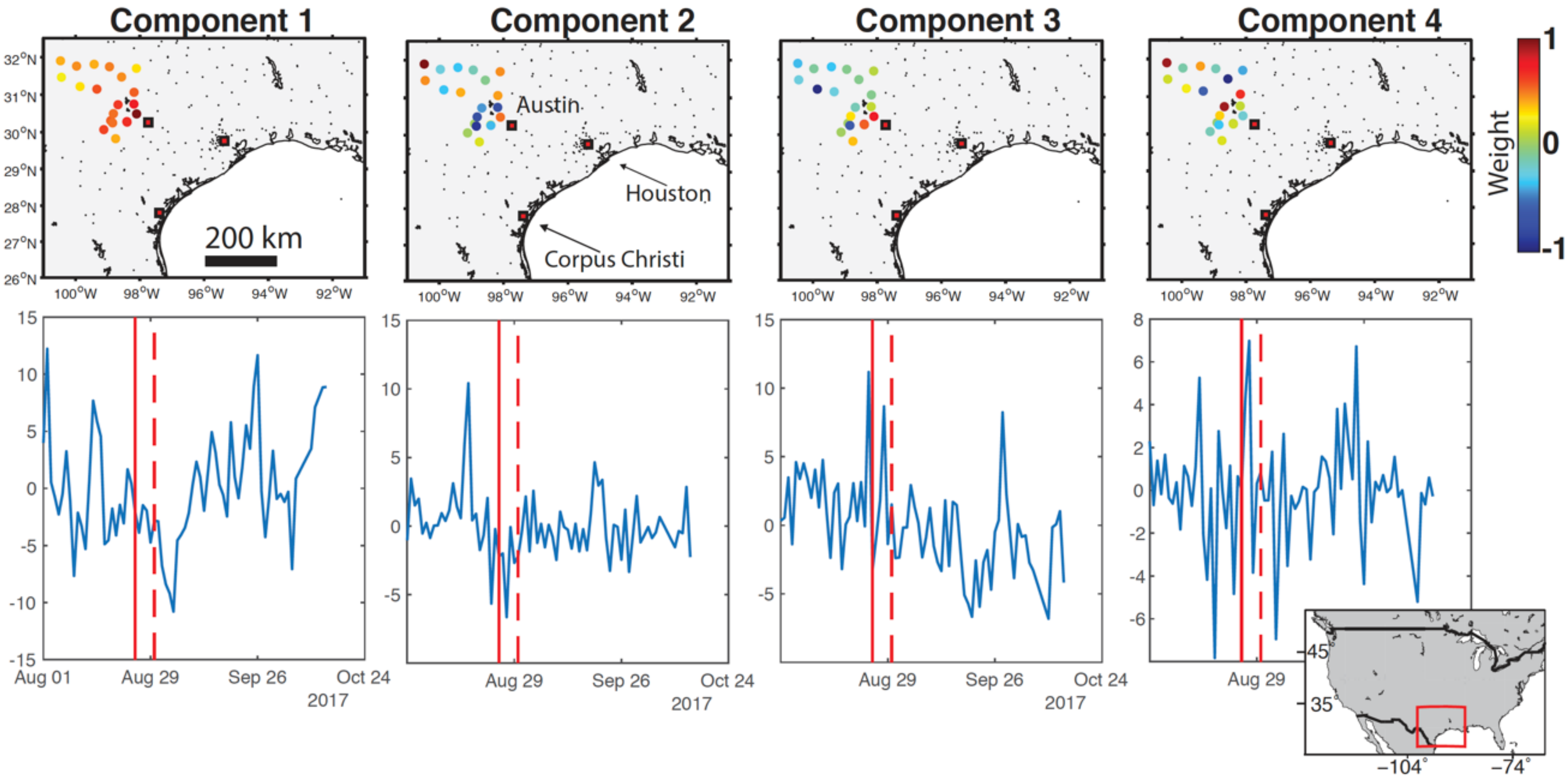
Idea: Assess which eigenvalues exceed that expected from a random process:

1. If uncert. exceeds separation, then component is deemed difficult to separate from its neighbor and from noise.

Horn's Parallel Analysis

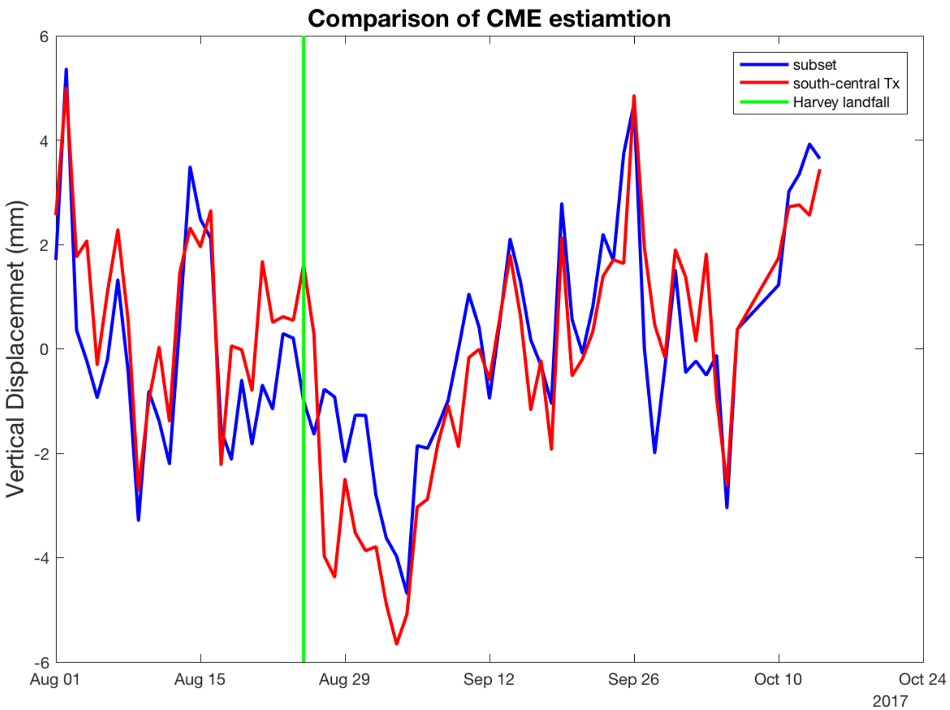
- Randomly scramble the data → suite of random samples and eigenspectra with 95% CI.
- If eigenvalue > 95% of eigenvalues from random data then component is retained.

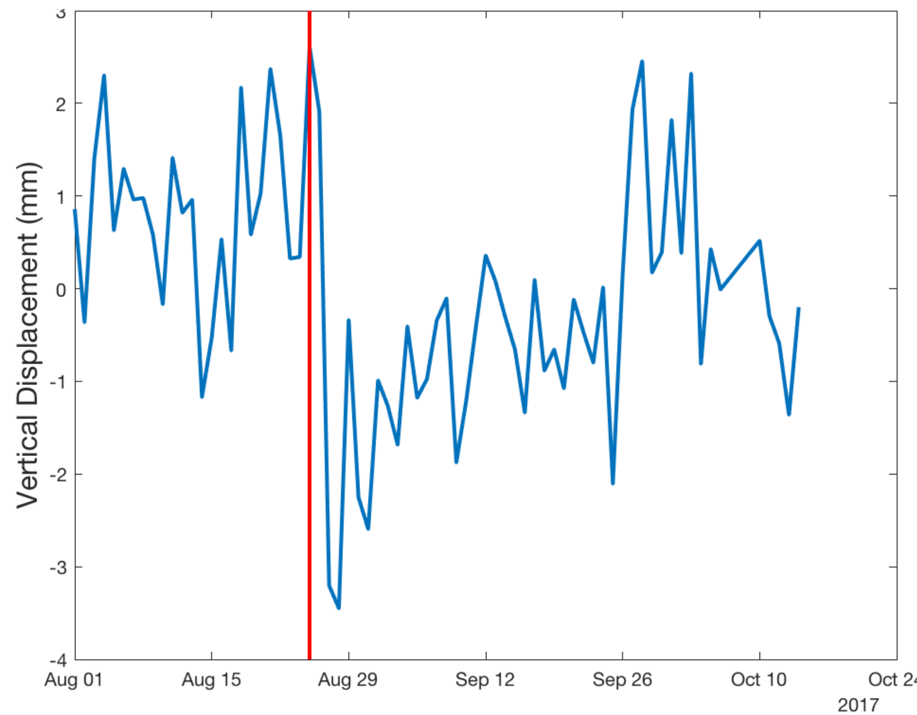
ICA filtering



- Components ordered in amount of motion explained.
- CME shows ~10 mm of subsidence, second landfall not detected.
- Hydrologic signal mixed onto first component
- Instead we estimate 'CME' from a subset of stations, distal from known precipitation
- Assume this CME is uniform across network

Comparing CME estimates





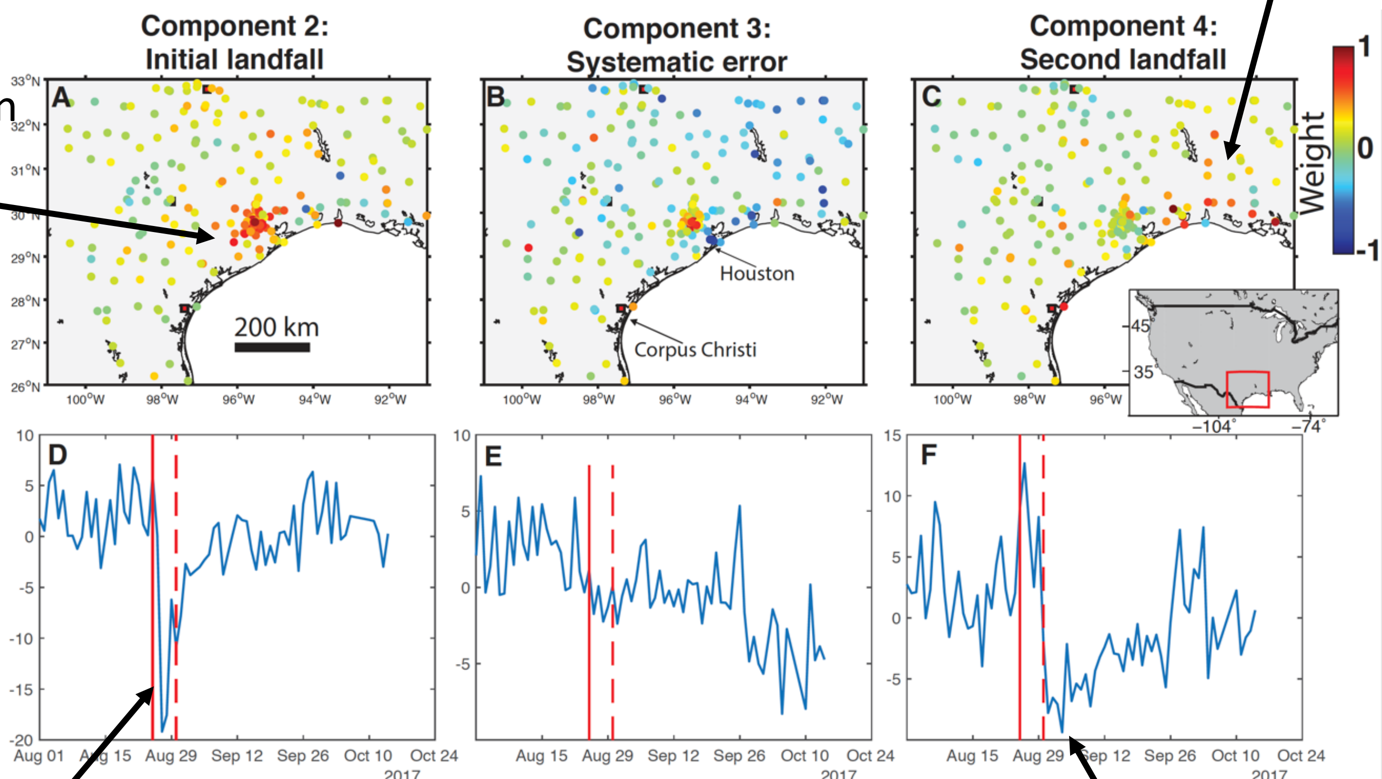
Red = CME from entire network
Blue = CME from subset of stations
Green = Landfall

- Above: Difference between two CME estimates
- Marked subsidence coincident with Harvey landfall (red line)
- Followed by gradual uplift
- Suggests hydrologic signal is mixed with CME

CME removed

Hydrologic signal:
Area of second landfall

Hydrologic signal:
Area of known precipitation



Hydrologic signal:
Coincident with initial landfall
Marked subsidence, gradual uplift

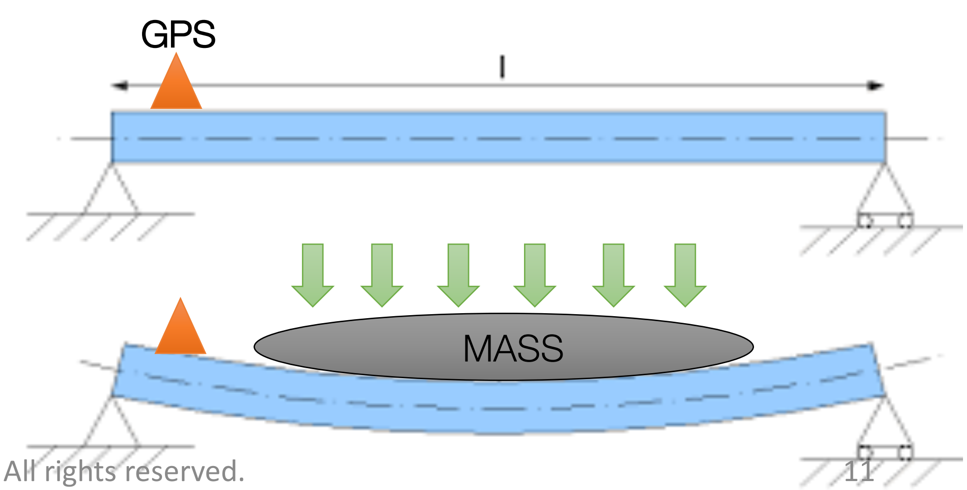
3rd component, a linear trend
Groundwater extraction

Hydrologic signal:
Coincident with second landfall
Marked subsidence, gradual uplift

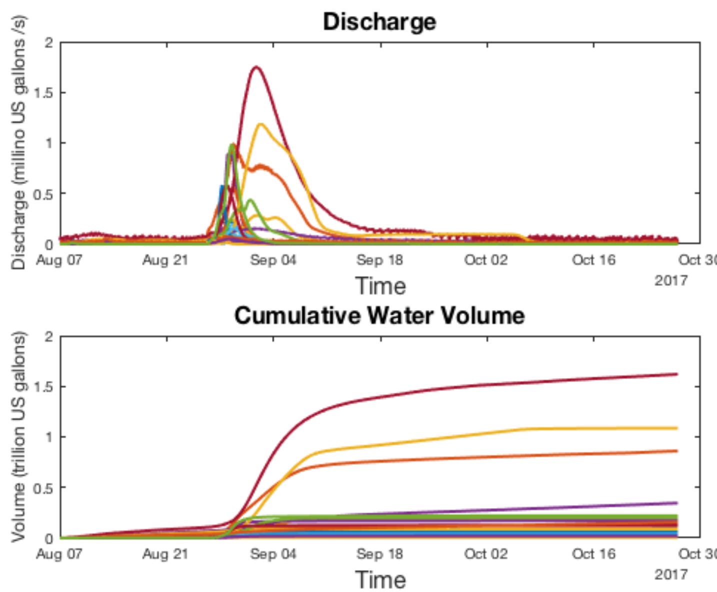
Invert GPS (E,N,V) → water thickness

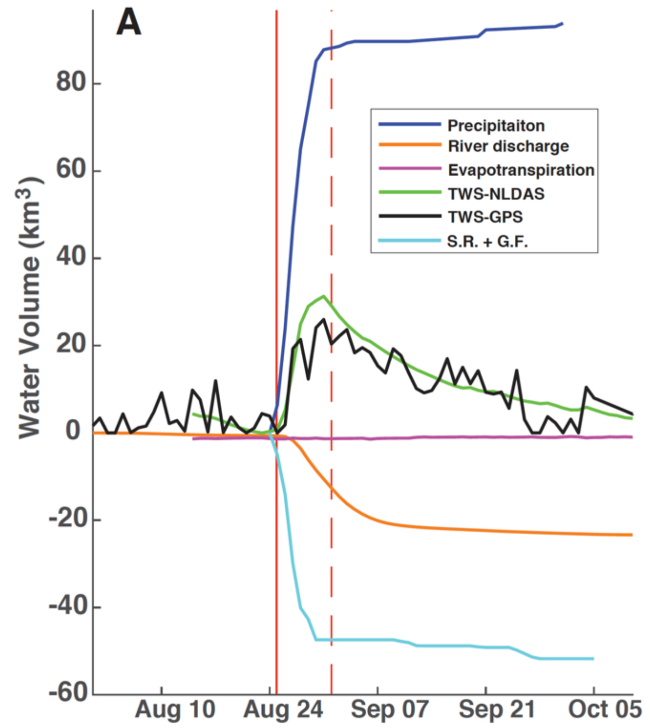
- Invert subsidence for water mass (Farrell, 1972).
- Assume a 1D layered, spherical elastic structure - PREM velocity model (Dziewonski and Anderson, 1981).

$$\begin{bmatrix} WG_v \\ WG_u \\ WG_u \\ \lambda S \\ \beta U \end{bmatrix} [m_t] = \begin{bmatrix} Wd_t^v \\ Wd_t^e \\ Wd_t^n \\ 0 \\ \beta U m_{t-1} \end{bmatrix}$$



Discussion – Components of the hydrologic system





$$S = P - \Delta TWS - ET - R$$

Surface runoff + groundwater flow → S; **Precipitation** → P; **Water storage** → ΔTWS; **Evapotranspiration** → ET; **River discharge** → R

- River discharge from 31 USGS gauges – accounts for 25 km^3 water loss, (minimum) ~27% of total,
- Evapotranspiration – accounts for ~18% of water loss, estimated from Fisher et al. (2008) using:
  - FLUXNET eddy covariance towers --> water + energy fluxes
  - MODIS instrument for radiation and vegetation indices
- Surface runoff and groundwater flow not well constrained.
- Closing water budget we estimate (maximum) ~50 km^3 of water lost via *S*, ~54% of total water.

Conclusions

- Dense cGPS + feature extraction tech. allows us to track the evolution of water storage from a a transient weather event.
  - Max subsidence of ~20 mm, followed by uplift over ~5 weeks
  - Peak water storage: ~25 km^3 = a third of Harvey's total water was captured + stored.
  - Water removed at ~1 gigaton/day
- **Implications**
  - GPS estimates of TWS can help **constrain hydrologic models → improve operational flood forecasting**
  - GPS can **fill in observational gap** of monthly GRACE Follow-on satellite data
- **Future work:**
- This was an unprecedented event, next test whether we can apply this to other, smaller hurricanes:
  - U.S.
  - Taiwan – many typhoons + dense cGPS network
  - Japan